

To the Honorable Court,

I am deeply ashamed of my actions and the person I had become several years ago. I take full responsibility for my actions, and I have no one to blame but myself. At the time this happened I had fallen into a terrible circle of peers that influenced my political and social understanding of the world. These relationships led to me making terrible decisions about my behaviors. I was associating with other people that were ignorant and content to be in a hateful echo chamber. I was not in my right mind for several years. I know the wrongfulness of my actions and I submit myself to the authority of this court and the laws of the United States. This is my fault, and I am filled with painful regret for my actions and the pain I have caused my family.

I want to reassure the court that this experience has changed me in many ways. At the time the agents searched my home, I was an arrogant and hateful young man. I was caught in the throes of a political ideology that was negative in everyway and lacked compassion for humanity. Since that time, I have slowly but genuinely changed my understanding of the world. It has been over 2 years since I was initially questioned by the agents in my parents home and I can say with complete conviction that I am not the same person I was then as I stand here before you. Although my time in custody over the past 7 months has been extremely difficult, I am grateful in many ways for this experience. In essence, this entire experience has caused me to rediscovery my own humanity and, more importantly, appreciate the humanity of everyone else in this world regardless of race, politics or gender. I am truly grateful for the personal growth that I have experienced, and the rest of my life will be far better because I went through this process.

I have caused tremendous pain for my family. Prior to my house being searched, my family struggled with my negative political and social views. I was a difficult person to love, and they loved me anyway through all my missteps. I have benefitted from their unconditional love and support and that has truly inspired me to seek positive change in myself. I am so grateful for their support. I also know that they will be there for me when I am released to ensure my transition back to the community is as positive as it possibly can be. My offense has destroyed my maritime career and I do not expect to be able to continue the path I had set on when I was 15. My education and professional accomplishments were a source of great pride for myself, and my family, and I have deprived them all of that with my actions. I was extremely proud of my career. I have never been in trouble before. Now all of that is gone due to my actions.

But all that I have lost is nothing to the sorrow and remorse I feel for anyone I have affected or offended in a negative way. I fully and completely reject all the radical views I once held. I humbly ask the Court for mercy. I want to thank the Court for taking the time to read my letter and consider all the mitigating factors from my case when you determine my sentence.

Very Respectfully,

George Pickard